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ABSTRACT

Patterns of drug use among teenagers indicate they are highly influenced by peers. To examine the influence of Say It Straight, an alcohol/drug abuse prevention program aimed at teaching adolescents to deal with peer pressure, sixth, seventh and eighth graders (N=509) created and role played situations in which they wanted to say "no" to an offer of alcohol/drugs or to talk to a friend who was "using." Satir's body sculpting was used to illustrate different communication styles and maximize the chance to elicit feelings. Youngsters exchanged information about their feelings as they interacted within role plays and practiced behaviors they found most effective. Every grade showed a statistically significant movement toward assertive attitudes which was not obtained in a control school. Comparing alcohol/drug related school suspensions and referrals for the entire school year showed fewer such incidents in the experimental than in the control schools. A follow-up of school suspensions during the succeeding academic year still found no new "users" among trained youngsters. (JAC)

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SAY IT STRAIGHT:
Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Training

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Sixth, seventh and eighth graders (N = 509) created and role played situations in which they wanted to say "no" to an offer of alcohol/ drugs or to talk to a friend who was "using." Satir's body sculpting was used to illustrate different communication styles and maximize the chance to elicit feelings. Youngsters exchanged information about their feelings as they interacted within role plays and practiced behaviors they found most effective. Every grade showed a statistically significant movement toward assertive attitudes which was not obtained in a control school. Comparing alcohol/drug related school suspensions and referrals for the entire school year showed fewer such incidents in the experimental than in the control schools ($p < .01$). A follow-up of school suspensions during the succeeding academic year still found no new "users" among trained youngsters.

Patterns of drug use among teens indicate that they are introduced to marijuana and other drugs as a result of peer contact, and although most first experiment with alcohol at home, their drinking habits thereafter are most strongly influenced by their peers (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1975; Jessor & Jessor, 1973). Furthermore, having a best friend or friends who smoke appears to be the best predictor of smoking in children from 5th through 12th grade (Kozlowsky, 1979). Such findings suggest that adolescents are either unwilling or unable to successfully resist peer pressure in substance abuse situations.

Recent research indicates that programs most successful in reducing the onset of smoking among adolescents have a common element: the teaching of skills necessary to resist pressure to smoke (Public Health Services, 1982; Evans, Rozelle, Maxwell, Raines, Dill, & Guthrie, 1981; Perry, Killen, & Slinkard, 1980; Hurd, Johnson, Pechacek, Bast, Jacobs, & Luepker, 1980; McAlister, Perry, Killen, Slinkard, & Maccoby, 1980; Botvin & Eng, 1982; McAlister, Perry, & Maccoby, 1979). Furthermore, in one of the above projects, McAlister, et al. (1980) found that frequent alcohol and marijuana use was also reported to be less prevalent by their target population which was given the opportunity to practice resisting social pressure to use these substances. Finally, Horan and Williams (1982) focused specifically on alcohol/drug use with students who scored low on assertiveness. They found increased assertiveness and a self reported decrease in willingness to use by trained youngsters.

The above programs used a variety of role models in the training (i.e., same age peers, older young peers, peers known and not known to the target audience, live role models, role models on film or videotape) and different levels of direct involvement on the part of the target audience in practicing the skills of saying "no." Inasmuch as target audiences had been directly involved in responding to social pressures to "use," it has been suggested in the literature (McAlister, Perry, et al., 1979; Evans, Rozelle, Mittelmark, Hansen, Bane, & Havis, 1978) that the process by means of which learning took place included both modeling behaviors (Bandura, 1977) and inoculation against social pressure (McGuire, 1964) to smoke or use other drugs.

The objective of the experiment reported here was to evaluate the effectiveness of an alcohol/drug-abuse prevention program called "SAY IT STRAIGHT" (SIS) which was developed by the first author. Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders were given the opportunity to explore some of their reasons for saying "yes" when they very much wanted to say "no" and "no" was in their best interest. They further explored how they felt when they found themselves in such situations. Youngsters developed role plays depicting situations in which they wanted to say "no" (particularly to offers of alcohol/drugs) or to talk to a friend who was using alcohol/drugs. The same situation was role played in a variety of communication styles. Youngsters were allowed to play the role of pusher for each other as well as explore how it felt to say "yes" and then change it to a "no." These skits were videotaped and played back. Youngsters explored their own feelings and received feedback on the feelings they evoked in their peers as well as on their effectiveness as a function of their communications. They received feedback about their verbal and nonverbal messages from youngsters who observed the role plays. Finally, they practiced those styles which they found most effective. Thus, this training focused on the development of skills necessary to implement constructive decisions.

The following communication styles were role played: passive/placating (we don't stand up for ourselves, we feel we are nothing without the other person's approval); aggressive/blaming (we push others around, we ridicule, threaten or blame); super-reasonable (we act like computers, we lecture without ever expressing our feelings); irrelevant (we discount ourselves, we are too uneasy to stick to the issue so we distract or change the subject); assertive/leveling (we respect our rights and the rights of others, we honestly express our thoughts and feelings rather than telling others what we think they feel).

Readers who are familiar with assertiveness training and with Virginia Satir's work in communications will notice the hybrid terminology of the above mentioned communication styles (Lange & Jakubowski, 1978; Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 1980; Satir, 1972; Satir, 1976). This pooling of concepts from assertiveness training (aggressive, passive or non-assertive, assertive) and from Satir's work (blaming, placating, being irrelevant, being super-reasonable, leveling) was done to highlight several points. Congruent with Satir's philosophy, countermanipulations such as "fogging," "clouding," "assertive irony," or "changing the subject" were not taught as part of assertiveness/leveling in the present training. Furthermore, using Satir's more differentiated communication concepts allowed more refined diagnoses of the youngsters' communication styles. Satir's body sculpting techniques (Satir, 1972; Satir, 1976) helped youngsters to become aware of the feelings which emerged as they role played the different communication styles. Finally, positive peer pressure was defined as a way to communicate to a friend our concern about his/her alcohol/drug related behaviors in a manner which expressed caring and support. Appropriately expressing our own feelings, rather than just stating to others what we think or how we think they feel, is the hallmark of leveling.

It was hypothesized that youngsters who participated in the training would experience a significant shift toward assertiveness/leveling and would have fewer alcohol/drug related school suspensions and referrals compared to youngsters who were exposed only to a standard school-administered substance abuse prevention program.

Method

Subjects

Experimental School. The experimental school, with 799 students, was selected at random from three possible middle schools (6th, 7th, 8th graders) in a southwestern city. Out of about 750 students enrolled in health class in the 1982-83 school year, 509 volunteered to participate and had parental permission to do so. Of these, 202 were 6th graders; 215 were 7th graders; and 92 were 8th graders. About 1/3 of all 8th graders took health in the previous school year.

Control Schools. One control school had a student body of 825 and was monitored only with respect to alcohol/drug related suspensions and referrals. A second control school administered an objective questionnaire, used to measure assertive/leveling attitudes (see Dependent Measures), to a sample of students before and after their substance abuse prevention program. This sample was comprised of one class of 21 6th graders, one class of 35 7th graders, and one class of 28 8th graders from a student body of 714.

Procedure

SIS training was conducted by two trainers over 10 consecutive days within regular class periods (45 minutes). Training was conducted in a classroom in which the teacher had just completed the school's substance abuse prevention curriculum. This teacher was responsible for the administration of an objective questionnaire which measured assertive/leveling attitudes. The questionnaire was administered before the school's substance abuse curriculum and again after the completion of SIS training. Although SIS training started at the beginning of the school year, almost an entire year was required to complete the training of 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Class size ranged from 18 to 32 students.

SAY IT STRAIGHT training-experimental school. In the first session the trainer asked youngsters to sit in a circle. A reference was made to films youngsters had seen during their school prevention curriculum in which the "no" to alcohol/drug offers was handled ineffectively. The trainer then asked, "Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you wanted very much to say 'no' and yet for whatever reason you wound up saying 'yes'? Perhaps a friend wanted to borrow a book you were using, or you were asked to come along and get high, or to have another piece of cake when you were stuffed, or to do anything you did not want to do. Those who have, raise your hand so that we can show each other that this is a pretty common situation; we are not alone." Time was given for youngsters to talk about some of the situations and explore their reasons for saying "yes". Among reasons given by youngsters

were fear of being rejected or not liked, fear of being embarrassed, fear of not being cool, fear of hurting someone's feelings, fear of losing a friend forever. The trainers went on to say that they were there to help the youngsters explore how they could say "no" and make it stick when they wanted to say it and it was in their best interest, as well as how they could talk to a friend about whose alcohol/drug related behaviors they were concerned.

The following communication styles were reviewed and role played by youngsters with the help of trainers: passive/placating, aggressive/blaming, assertive/leveling, being super-reasonable, being irrelevant and using positive peer pressure. Trainers acted as directors, coaching (if needed) one role player to manipulate the other with strategies such as "why not," "who are you to...," "mama's boy," "baby," "chicken," "I thought you were my best friend," "if you keep this up, I won't be your friend," etc. After allowing the other role player to struggle, trainers helped him/her to explore how to overcome such manipulations using various communication styles. For example, an assertive/leveling response to ridicule might be, "so you think I'm chicken, I still don't want to smoke it," and leaving the scene. Another assertive/leveling response could be "no, I don't want it and it scares me to see you using it." During the role plays trainers pointed out the importance of body language (eye contact, body posture, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions) and the congruence between body language and the spoken message. Youngsters explored their feelings and received feedback about the feelings they evoked in others and the effectiveness of their communication.

The introduction to these concepts took one to one-and-a-half classroom sessions. During the second session students wrote their own skits. Except for the review session on the tenth day, the remaining sessions were spent videotaping, playing back and processing role plays.

Ten minutes were reserved during the last session for the administration of an anonymous subjective questionnaire (see Dependent Measures). This subjective questionnaire was used only in the experimental school.

Youngsters without parental permission were allowed to stay in the classroom but did not participate in the training.

Dependent Measures

a. Objective Questionnaire. At an attitudinal level, changes in assertiveness/leveling were measured by means of a questionnaire based on Prince's "Social Skills Situation Survey" (Prince, 1975). Thirty-one questions were scored on a five point scale with zero (0) indicating the most assertive response and four (4) indicating the least assertive. The total score was divided by the number of questions answered.

To preserve anonymity, youngsters were assigned identification numbers which were the same for pre and post-tests. The experimental school administered the questionnaire just before the school's prevention curriculum and within three weeks after SIS training was finished. In one control school the

questionnaire was administered just before the school's prevention curriculum and within three weeks after it was finished.

b. Subjective Questionnaire. The subjective questionnaire gave students the opportunity to write responses in their own words to questions such as what they learned about saying "no" and what they would do if they found a friend using. Not all youngsters received the latter question because it was added in the middle of the year. To objectify some of these subjective responses an item was included which asked students to check which of the following they found out it was OK to do: 1. say no; 2. say no without giving excuses; 3. leave the scene; 4. risk a friend getting mad at me; 5. risk getting mad at a friend; 6. other. Although the subjective questionnaire was not used for any statistical analysis it gave students a chance to give anonymous feedback of a nature not possible on a totally objective questionnaire.

c. Behavioral Measure. The effect of SIS training at a behavioral level was measured by means of alcohol/drug related school suspensions and referrals by parents, police, and counselors to the school system's Auxiliary Services. Drug related behaviors excluded the use of smoking tobacco, but included "dipping" snuff.

It is important to note that even if individual schools differed in school suspension policies, these were administered uniformly by the Office of the Superintendent. For example, one of the control schools did not consider alcohol/drug use by students at a school function after school hours (i.e. basketball game) to be school related. Thus, this school would not have suspended such students. However, these students were suspended at a higher administrative level and their suspensions were labelled as alcohol/drug related. The suspensions reported in this study were obtained through the school system's Auxilliary Services from the Superintendent's Office rather than from individual schools.

Preparatory training of assistants and consultation. Three undergraduate students assisted the first author in the delivery of the SAY IT STRAIGHT training. These students were selected on the basis of their leadership qualities, general ease of communication, and willingness to look at their own communication problems in difficult situations. These student-trainers participated in approximately 70 hours of preparatory training which included workshops in chemical dependency, assertiveness training and Virginia Satir's communication styles. They were videotaped in role plays which centered on their own communication problems in difficult situations, especially as these might apply to drug use/abuse situations.

Trainers met in a weekly consultation session during the year when SIS training was conducted. These sessions gave trainers the opportunity to deal with their own problems such as frustration, loss of self-confidence, anxiety, anger, and other feelings which arose as they interacted with youngsters, the school system, other organizational personnel, co-trainers, or from their personal life which might have impinged on them as trainers.

Results

Behavioral Measure

By the end of the school year there had been 12 alcohol/drug related school suspensions and referrals among the 799 students in the experimental school. None of these were incurred by the 509 trained youngsters after participation in the training. The two control schools with 1539 students had 55 such suspensions and referrals. Since it is not known how many of the incidents in the control schools occurred prior to or after the school administered substance abuse prevention program, the comparison between experimental and control schools was made on the basis of all such incidents during the academic year. The following contingency table shows alcohol/drug related suspensions and referrals in the experimental and control schools from which a Chi Square was computed:

	Suspended/Referred	Not Suspended/Not Referred
Experimental School	12	787
Control Schools	55	1484

A Chi Square analysis yielded $\chi^2 = 7.38$, df = 1, $p < .01$, with the experimental school having significantly lower alcohol/drug related suspensions and referrals.

Alcohol/drug related school suspensions were monitored during the 1983-84 school year in the city's two junior high schools. The 8th graders who were trained during the 1982-83 school year were 9th graders in either junior high. Not a single new "user" was identified among them (as defined by alcohol/drug related school suspensions). Records of referrals could not be obtained for the 1983-84 school year. In addition, alcohol/drug related suspensions were monitored in the school where the previously trained 6th and 7th graders had become 7th and 8th graders in the 1983-84 school year. Again, not a single new user was identified among these youngsters. A detailed presentation of the work with these youngsters, some of whom received reinforcement in SIS training, is in preparation.*

Attitudinal Measure: Objective Questionnaire

The movement toward assertive/leveling attitudes was analyzed by means of t-tests for paired observations which compared the scores obtained by the students on the objective questionnaire before and after SIS training.

Although 509 students participated in the training in the experimental school, data analysis on the objective questionnaire is based on 361

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*Englander-Golden, P., Elconin, J., Miller, K.J., Bradley, A., & Satir, V. Brief **SAY IT STRAIGHT** training and follow-up in adolescent substance abuse prevention. Work in progress, 1984.

students. One hundred forty students were dropped from the analysis because they lacked the pretest or post-test and thus did not have paired observations. This included one eighth grade class whose post-tests were lost in the school. Eight students were dropped from analysis because they answered fewer than 15 questions (arbitrary cutoff) on the pretest or post-test.

The breakdown of students whose data was included in the analysis is as follows: 157 6th graders, 163 7th graders, 41 8th graders.

Data analysis on the objective questionnaire administered in the control school was based on 25 8th graders and 34 7th graders. Three 8th graders and one 7th grader were dropped from analysis because they were missing either a pretest or a post-test. The pretests and post-tests of the 6th grade control group were not matched by the school, making analysis for paired observations impossible. Although a t-test for independent measures is not appropriate when comparing the pre- and post-treatment scores of the same group of people, it was nevertheless carried out since it was the only analysis possible. Only one youngster was dropped for not answering the minimum 15 questions. Twenty questionnaires were available for the pretest and 16 for the post-test.

Table 1 shows mean pretest and post-test scores on the objective questionnaire obtained from 6th, 7th and 8th graders in the experimental and control schools, standard deviations, results of t-tests for paired observations (t-tests for independent observations for 6th grade controls), degrees of freedom and significance levels. Number of youngsters is indicated in parentheses.

As can be seen, results in Table 1 support the hypothesis, i.e., all experimental grades moved significantly toward assertiveness/leveling while none of the control grades did so. For trained 6th graders $t=5.63$, $df=156$, $p < .01$; for trained 7th graders $t=7.51$, $df=162$, $p < .01$; for trained 8th graders $t=3.27$, $df=40$, $p < .01$.

TABLE 1

Mean Pre- and Post-test Scores on Assertive/Leveling Questionnaires for 6th, 7th and 8th Graders in the Experimental and Control Schools, Standard Deviations, t-tests, Degrees of Freedom and Significance Levels.

Grade	Pretest			Post-test			t	df	p
	Mean	N	S.D.	Mean	N	S.D.			
6th experimental	.926	(157)	.423	.760	(157)	.429	5.63	156	.0001
7th experimental	.913	(163)	.376	.719	(163)	.370	7.51	162	.0001
8th experimental	1.109	(41)	.524	.820	(41)	.403	3.27	40	.0022
8th control	.925	(25)	.425	.908	(25)	.328	0.19	24	.8547
7th control	.785	(34)	.290	.705	(34)	.364	1.78	33	.0843
6th control*	.696	(20)	.315	.578	(16)	.335	1.08	34	.2873

*t-test for 6th grade control group is for independent measures

The pretests of the control and experimental schools were compared by means of t-tests for independent measures to determine the equivalence of the youngsters on the assertiveness/leveling measure prior to training. Statistically significant differences were not observed for 8th graders ($t=1.48$, $df=64$, p=n.s.). For 7th graders the difference came close to being significant ($t=1.87$, $df=195$, $p < .063$), and for 6th graders the difference was significant ($t=2.35$, $df=175$, $p < .05$). Both 6th and 7th grade controls started with scores indicating a greater degree of assertiveness/leveling than experimental 6th and 7th grades. Yet only experimental grades moved significantly toward assertiveness/leveling (see Table 1).

Subjective Questionnaire

Although the subjective questionnaire was not used for statistical analyses, the following information was obtained from it. 183 questionnaires were returned by 6th graders, 200 by 7th graders and 89 by 8th graders.

To the statement "What I learned about saying 'no' was:" 170 6th graders gave responses such as "I could say 'no' and feel good about it," "it is easy to say 'no'," "you can say 'no' many different ways," "say 'no' effectively or you might end up saying 'yes'," "body language is as good as saying 'no'," "you can say 'no' without getting mad," "once you say 'no' don't give excuses," "it's hard to say 'no' sometimes," "it's O.K. to leave when they push me around." Seven responses suggested that nothing was learned, three could not be understood, and three did not respond.

One hundred ninety 7th graders gave responses to this statement such as "saying 'no' is very important," "being sure of yourself is the main thing," "helpful," "it can save your life," "different kinds of ways," "I can feel guilty saying 'no'," "the way you stand, your tone of voice will show them if you mean it or not," "assertive can help you be happy and other people to be able to take it better," "assertive 'no' is the best for me and really works," "it is very difficult to say 'no'," "I have a choice," and "it has power." Seven did not respond, two responded with "nothing," and one could not be understood.

Seventy-two 8th graders gave responses to this statement such as "that you don't have to feel guilty when you say 'no'," "most people won't say 'no' because they are afraid of being called names," "it helped me a lot," "passivity--don't make excuses," "you can say 'no' and not hurt somebody's feelings," "that you can respect yourself," "that if it made you feel good to say 'no' you did the right thing," "I like to be assertive and it feels pretty good." Eight responses suggested that little or nothing was learned, one responded "I don't know," one said "to be aggressive," and seven did not respond.

One hundred seventy-nine 6th graders checked at least one possible response to the statement "I found out that it is O.K. to:". Of these, 158 checked "say 'no'," 151 checked "say 'no' without giving excuses or explanations," 123 checked "leave the scene," 120 checked "risk a friend getting mad at me," and 109 checked "risk getting mad at a friend." The statement "other:" elicited responses such as "risk losing a friend," "say 'no' without fighting," "get aggressive," "say 'no' no matter what the consequences," "not

be friends anymore," "say 'no' first," "ignore," "get help for drugs," and "smoke."

One hundred ninety-nine 7th graders checked at least one response to this statement. One hundred eighty-five checked "say 'no'," 183 checked "say 'no' without giving excuses or explanations," 164 checked "leave the scene," 155 checked "risk a friend getting mad at me," and 141 checked "risk getting mad at a friend." Responses to the statement "other:" included "be aggressive if you have to," "get the point across, help a friend, not take drugs, smoke, drink, etc.," "get upset and confused when you are the person trying to say 'no'," "doing whatever I must to meet my needs as long as I don't hurt the other person unnecessarily," "talk friends out of dope," "have your own opinions."

Eighty-seven 8th graders responded to this statement. Of these, 73 checked "say 'no'," 70 checked "say 'no' without giving excuses or explanations," 68 checked "leave the scene," 55 checked "risk getting a friend mad at me," and 48 checked "risk getting mad at a friend." Responses to "other:" included "yell 'yes' and 'no' when the teacher says it's O.K.," "not to listen to threats and not to give threats."

The statement "If I found a friend using I would:" was included on 44 of the questionnaires responded to by 6th graders, 58 of those responded to by 7th graders, and 43 of those responded to by 8th graders.

Twenty 6th graders made statements indicating they would help the friend, such as "tell them what I learned about drugs," "help them," "take them to the counselor," "tell them I worry about them," "talk to them." Eleven gave responses such as "reject them," "tell them to get lost," "it's their decision," "stay away from him or her," and "retire as his friend." There were nine more aggressive responses, such as "punch him in the lip," "be mad," and "sock him." One said "use with him," and three did not respond.

Of 7th graders, 38 advocated helping the friend, with responses such as "I would ask the counselor what I should do about my friend," "be concerned and try to help them quit," "let them know I care about them and convince them to quit doing whatever they're doing." Eight responses were more rejecting,

i.e., "it's your body and your fault," "probably not hang around them any more," "I would drop him," "say 'get out of my life'." One responded "beat him up," two indicated that they would use as well, one could not be understood, and eight did not respond.

Among 8th graders, 36 gave responses such as "try to help them out through it all, and I would probably recommend them to family counseling," "tell them if they needed help I would be there," "go to the counselor and try to convince them to go to the counselor." Three responses indicated doing nothing or ending the friendship: "do nothing," "probably not be their friend anymore and sort of feel sorry for them," "drop him or her like a bad habit." Three responded more aggressively: "ask him to quit or I'll break his arm," "get out of my face," "tell them to ___," and one said "I'd do it with him."

Discussion

Both the short term results and the one year follow-up of SIS training with 6th, 7th, and 8th graders appear to be very promising.

To compare behavioral effects of SIS training with behavioral effects of school administered substance abuse prevention curricula all youngsters in the city who were in the appropriate grades were monitored. Possible confounding variables which might have affected the behavioral measure were: (1) youngsters moving to a different school district, and (2) unequal attention to alcohol/drug related behaviors in the different schools. The plausibility of the first confounding variable is minimized by the sheer number of youngsters followed over a period of two school years. The second confounding variable was minimized by obtaining information from the Office of the Superintendent rather than from individual schools. Still, there remains the possibility that in some of the schools a youngster would never come to anyone's attention. Since school counselors have reported that after SIS training youngsters come to talk about their concerns about friends, it is quite plausible that alcohol/drug related behaviors were less likely to go unreported in the experimental school than in the control schools. Under-reporting of alcohol/drug related behaviors in the control schools could have only weakened the results of the study.

Similar to research designed to reduce the onset of smoking or the use of other drugs among adolescents (Public Health Services, 1982; Evans, Rozelle, et al., 1981; Perry, Killen, et al., 1980; Hurd, Johnson, et al., 1980; McAlister, Perry, et al., 1980; Botvin & Eng, 1982; McAlister, Perry, et al., 1979), the research presented here is based on modeling (Bandura, 1977) and inoculation against social pressure (McGuire, 1964). Major differences between SIS training and the above programs are the inclusion of body sculpting in SIS training, the greater emphasis on role playing by the target population (including the role of the "pusher" and saying "yes"), processing feelings as they emerge in the role players, the exchange of feedback among role players on the effects of their communication, and the use of assertiveness/leveling rather than countermanipulation.

Direct communication among youngsters eliminates the need for trainers to tell them about the possible effects of saying "yes," saying "no," or talking to a friend who is "using". By processing the role plays, youngsters hear "from the horse's mouth" the effect they have on each other. For example, when a youngster gives in to a friend's pressure to drink beer, he/she may be told by the friend: "I didn't respect you. I thought you were a pushover." We believe that this feedback has a much greater impact than a lecture from an adult. Similarly, when a youngster does not succumb to an offer, but says an assertive/leveling "no," the feedback from the friend: "I respected you. I was shocked that you could just say 'no' and walk away from me," is again more valuable than hearing about the possibility of such an effect from the trainer. Finally, when role playing pushers, youngsters get in touch with a feeling of respect toward the person who says "no" in an assertive/leveling way (Englander-Golden, Elconin, et al., 1984). In this manner, they may come to understand that in similar real-life situations, even when their "no" is ridiculed, there may be underlying respect.

SIS training is offered as an opportunity for youngsters to gain communication skills so that when they want to say "no," and "no" is in their best interest, they can do so effectively; to gain skills which will maximize their effectiveness in making themselves heard by a friend. By respecting youngsters' freedom, which is one of the most important values to them (Beech &

Schoeppe, 1970), SIS training minimizes the risk of rebellious reaction to the training. The possibility of such a reaction has been dicussed (Johnson, 1982).

SIS training respects what youngsters want to explore rather than restricting them to alcohol/drug related role plays. Allowing youngsters to role play situations which are salient to them may be one of the factors contributing to the success with which SIS training was delivered to 6th graders. Detrimental effects, such as those reported in drug education programs with young children (Johnson, 1982), were not found as a result of SIS training.

McGuire's inoculation theory (McGuire, 1964) is probably relevant to two aspects of SIS training. First, inoculation is concerned with resistance to persuasion. What treatment can enable a person to resist persuasion to do something he or she does not want to do? At the beginning of SIS training youngsters are asked to get into the placating body posture (on their knees on the floor) and get in touch with a situation in which they very much wanted to say "no," "no" was in their best interest, and yet for whatever reason they wound up saying "yes." Youngsters reported feeling little or no self-esteem under such conditions and did not want to repeat the experience. Second, inoculation as developed through "refutational defense" is probably important when youngsters change a passive/placating "yes" to an assertive/leveling "no."

In SIS training youngsters model effective communications for each other. However, in view of the fact that they also assume the role of pushers and explore saying a passive/placating "yes," modeling theory could predict that they will learn these behaviors. The possibility of negative effects due to such role plays was not borne out.

The issue of optimum age of the target population at time of training can be resolved only with more follow-up time. Although we know that no new users have been found thus far among youngsters who were trained as 6th, 7th, or 8th graders, we do not yet know about possible interaction effects between age-at-training and future use. Consistently, trainers found work with 8th graders more difficult than with lower grades, yet the results indicate that work with

8th graders is very important. The possibility that prevention work may have to be done precisely with the most difficult age has been discussed (Johnson, 1982).

The results of this research indicate that most young people do not want to be involved in substance abuse. When given the opportunity to develop assertiveness/leveling skills, they can negotiate pressure situations successfully. Furthermore, youngsters have reported actual situations in which they have put these skills to use. These included effective use of assertive/leveling refusal as well as positive peer pressure behaviors. Finally, from questions youngsters addressed to the trainers and from reports by school personnel it was apparent that youngsters generalized these new skills to other life situations such as sexuality and school misbehavior.

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